DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 445 491 EF 005 772

AUTHOR Beeton, Ken
TITLE Modernising the Schools Infrastructure in England.
PUB DATE 1999-00-00
NOTE 10p.; Keynote address delivered at the UEF/PEB/CAE International Symposium 1999 (Baltimore, MD, USA).
AVAILABLE FROM For full text: http://www.oecd.org//els/edu/peb/resource.htm#A.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Finance; *Educational Improvement; *Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; *Modernization; Public Schools; *School Maintenance
IDENTIFIERS *England; Infrastructure

ABSTRACT

This keynote speech addresses how to modernize school infrastructure for the delivery of 21st century education in England, including the background of the English education system and the current state of the English school estate and maintenance backlog. It discusses the government's role for improving the education system and raising standards, new sources of money using public private partnerships, and the following three challenges that large inflows of extra capital present: how to target money more effectively to raise standards; the need for better delivery mechanisms to improve value for money and the stewardship of school premises; and how to evaluate capital spending. Specific programs to address particular needs are also addressed, including the City Learning Centres program, community use of school facilities, and the millennium school. (GR)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original document.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

http://www.oecd.org//els/edu/peb/resource.htm#A

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Ken Beeton
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Modernising the Schools Infrastructure in England

by Ken Beeton, Head of Schools Capital and Buildings, Department for Education and Employment, England [1]

Keynote Talk at the UEF/PEB/CAE International Symposium 1999
Baltimore, Maryland, USA

ED 445 491

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. This is my first visit to Baltimore, and I must say my entry through Baltimore airport was a lot easier than that of some of my compatriots in 1812, during our little disagreement then. I hope that any arguments and discussions we have today will be much more good natured!

I think the organisers have done an excellent job in the arrangements for the conference. I would like to thank them all for their efforts and for choosing a topic which is of widespread interest to most OECD countries today. **[SLIDE 1]**

- How to modernise our schools infrastructure for the delivery of 21st century education. That is the theme of my talk today, in the context of the UK.

[SLIDE 2] I will include in my talk some of the background to the English education system, and what is now our starting point as far as the condition of the school estate and the maintenance backlog is concerned. In May 1997, a new Labour Government was elected (after 18 years under the previous administration). It announced its priorities as being: "Education, Education, Education". So I'll say a few words about this agenda and some of the innovations we are making with the increased funding. I'll also give some details of an interesting evaluation study we have underway looking at the impact of capital investment on standards, and then talk about some specific programmes. All interspersed with a few pictures to help move things along!

I must make it clear that even though I am from DfEE in London, I will be talking largely about England only. **[SLIDE 3]** Education in the UK is devolved, so Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are responsible for their own education policies - but these would still closely reflect those of England. But having said that, England is a very large part of the UK as you can see from these population figures. Almost 85% of the UK population lives in England.

Background

Before I go on to talk about what we are doing, let me give a bit of brief background about our education system. **[SLIDE 4]** The country is divided into 150 local authorities of one form or another - some urban, some rural, and each has an Education Directorate. We call these (fairly loosely) Local Education Authorities (LEAs).

EF 005 772

Education is more of less compulsory from the age of 4 to 16. The Government is committed to increase the numbers staying on up to the age of 18, and is also making more school places available for 3 year olds. So the numbers participating are expanding.

[SLIDE 5] There are about 9 million pupils and just under ½ million teachers in England. We have about 24,000 maintained (or state) schools made up as **[SLIDE 6]** you can see on the next slide of:

- **Community** (two thirds) - fully maintained and funded by LEAs

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- **Voluntary** (over 30%) - large involvement of the Churches (mainly Anglican and Catholic, but also, for example, some Jewish, Methodist, Muslim, and one Seventh Day Adventist, schools - reflecting a rich diversity)

- **Foundation** (remainder) - fully maintained but more autonomous

[SLIDE 7] Even though the DfEE has policy responsibility for education and its funding, we do not own any schools. The schools are mostly owned and run by LEAs. Each LEA has a different number of schools - from around 30 to 700. Different types of school have different funding arrangements and different degrees of autonomy.

The schools that are owned by LEAs are the **Community** schools. From April this year, responsibility and funding for revenue repairs has been delegated to these schools as part of their school budget, but otherwise the LEA has all the responsibilities of ownership.

Then there are **Foundation** schools - these are a new type of school. They are owned and run by the school governors. They still get their money from the LEA but they manage their capital projects, have more influence over their admissions policies and have much more control generally over their affairs. Many of these schools opted out of LEA control during Mrs Thatcher's time, in order to break-up a strong LEA monopoly on the delivery of education, and promote greater diversity of choice. In general, the schools have been successful. The present Government has returned them to the LEA funding system, but has learnt lessons which it plans to now use for the benefit of all schools. I think they are perhaps a bit like your Charter Schools, which I believe are Federally funded.

And then there are **Voluntary** schools. These are owned by the Churches, but form part of the state system. Voluntary Aided schools get funding from DfEE, LEAs and the Churches. They have a lot of autonomy and, generally, high standards. Voluntary Controlled schools are owned by the Churches but otherwise operate as Community schools.

That is our education system - at least as far as funding processes are concerned.

Backlog

What are our school buildings like? We have a wide variety of school buildings - a few are over 200 years old! We still have many schools over a hundred years old such as these **[SLIDE 8]**, Victorian schools. We have a large number of schools from the 1930s **[SLIDE 9]** and a lot of system built schools from the 1950s and 1960s **[SLIDE 10]** when pupil numbers were expanding rapidly. And then we have a few modern schools built in the last 15 years. **[SLIDE 11].** We also have well over 20,000 temporary classrooms at our schools. These are usually anything but temporary, and some have been in use for over 40 years!

[SLIDE 12] This slide summarises the position. Is anyone here good with numbers? Can you spot the tidal wave building up? Most of the buildings are now at or past the end of their design life.

[SLIDE 13] This pie chart shows the breakdown of the school estate. As you can see, only a relatively small proportion are in modern (non system) buildings. **[SLIDE 14]** The total school building estate is valued at around £60 billion - at the present exchange rate about $100bn dollars. School inspectors (OFSTED) consider that one in five schools have unsatisfactory accommodation. Many school buildings are very clearly in a poor condition. For about 15 years, in the 1980s and early 1990s, school capital programmes were underfunded so there is a huge backlog of repair and maintenance. Added to that, we have all the issues of

modernisation to deal with. So there is a need for major capital investment. The unsatisfactory condition of many school buildings is partly due to past underfunding, but the system for handling capital has also had many perverse incentives within it, and there has been a lack of effective monitoring. Often money allocated for education was spent on other things. There is no incentive to maintain premises properly if someone else will pick up the resulting capital bill!

New Government

[SLIDE 15] Tony Blair's Labour Government was elected in May 1997 on the platform of improving the education system and raising standards. During the campaign, he made it clear that he wants everyone to have the knowledge and skills to succeed in life. He said that our economic future depends on a skilled, educated workforce, able to take advantage of the new knowledge-based industries. A decent education is also the best guarantee of a life free from unemployment, crime, drugs, and poverty. And this chance should be there for all, not rationed to just a few. So this all means much greater investment, a total commitment to raising standards, zero tolerance of failure and reforms throughout the education system. Within the first 8 weeks of being elected, the new Government published a White Paper on education - Excellence in Schools. This set out the Government's agenda, and over the next few months there was new legislation. The aim of it all was to raise standards. The Government has now set demanding educational attainment targets for all LEAs, and taken powers to intervene where an LEA fails to meet them. Intervention comes in inverse proportion to success, with a lighter touch for those who do well and a heavy hand for those who don't!

The Government recognises that to improve standards it also needs to modernise school buildings, and to prepare the way for greater ICT based education. So it is not surprising that a lot more money has been made available for schools and education generally.

[SLIDE 16] An additional £19 billion will be invested in education over the next 3 years - an average real terms increase of 5.0% per annum to the end of the Parliament. As part of this, there will be more than a doubling of capital investment in school buildings. Over a four year period, over £6 billion will be spent on capital works at schools made up of the original baseline of £2.5 billion, the New Deal for Schools which was announced two months after the election to deal with the most urgent repairs, the Comprehensive Spending Review which reprioritised Government spending (with education a clear winner), and a lot of money to develop public private partnerships and reduce class sizes for children from 5-7 years old. In addition a Capital Modernisation Fund was announced to promote cross Government initiatives - which has to be bid for jointly by Departments, and we have so far gained £350 million from that.

Public Private Partnerships

[SLIDE 17] One of the main new sources of money was for public private partnerships - in effect, a guaranteed revenue stream to support new capital projects. There has been a huge demand for this type of project and all available money has been allocated right up to the end of this Parliament (and we could have allocated many times more!). In essence, the projects enable schools and LEAs to focus on teaching rather than running a building, risk is placed where it is best managed, and the commercial incentive produces better value for money. And the buildings get maintained properly over the life of the deal, which is normally around 25 years.

The aims of these deals are simple enough. If we can specify what we want from a building - not in terms of inputs such as how many windows or what kind of heating system, but in terms of outputs, such as light levels and temperatures - then the private sector can identify the best ways of providing them. If we can say to the private sector, not only do we want you to finance and build the school, but also to maintain and heat and clean it to an agreed standard for 25

years, we are in an excellent position, with good competition, to minimise lifetime costs. Since the private sector bears the risks it can deal with best - such as the cost of necessary repairs, or energy costs, then it makes sure these are managed well. We pay a fixed monthly fee, which is cut if output standards are not met. The private sector partners can also generate additional income from the facilities they provide - and we may share in the profits.

We are applying this approach in schools on an increasing level - our annual budget for PFI (Private Finance Initiative) schools has gone up tenfold in two years. The first school built under the PFI opened at the beginning of 1999: in a year's time, we should have about 200 schools newly built or with major capital works completed. This is still a complex and difficult process for both the public and private sectors, mainly since it challenges the normal way of doing things. But it is one that is now beginning to take off as more people sign contracts, and it is set, in schools as in other parts of the public sector, to become a continuing major feature of how we provide accommodation and facilities management.

New Initiatives

[SLIDE 18] The large inflow of extra capital has set many new challenges, and our innovations have focused on three main areas:

- how to target money more effectively to raise standards
- the need for better delivery mechanisms to improve value for money and the stewardship of school premises
- how to evaluate capital spending.

I want to say something about all three.

Targeting/AMPs

Firstly - how to achieve better targeting. The condition of schools varies widely and there are also huge differences between LEAs. So how do you make sure the money goes where it is most needed and where it will have the biggest effect on standards?

Our traditional method has been to invite bids for individual projects. But this approach generates a lot of wasted effort. Last year, LEAs and schools bid for 6 times more money than we had available. It also involved us, sitting in the ivory tower in London, in making decisions on local priorities. We want to move away from this approach to one in which LEAs and schools have greater ownership and assess their priorities locally on a proper basis.

Our vehicle for doing this is Asset Management Plans.

Asset Management Plans (or AMPs) are a major innovation. I will be saying much more about them in the track after this presentation, but given their importance, I would also like to say a bit more now.

AMPs are essentially a framework for assessing capital needs and agreeing priorities locally in a robust, fair and improved way, and in a spirit of good partnership and collaboration.

[SLIDE 19] Capital requirements will be assessed for three main types of need, which are:

- Condition - self explanatory
- Suitability - relates to the curriculum

- Sufficiency - the number of schools and total areas available.

For each of these, we are issuing guidance about how to do the assessment. This is the first time that anyone has established a national framework for the assessment of school buildings in England. AMPs will help us tremendously in determining exactly what the problems are at each school and within LEAs. And when most AMPs are operational, at around the end of next year, we will have the complete national picture of the standard of school buildings, and the need for capital investment.

We have consulted extensively on the content of AMPs. There is widespread, if not complete, support for the proposals. We have already issued the first four sections of guidance: **[SLIDE 20]**

Section 1	-	Framework
Section 2	-	Property Information Systems
Section 3	-	Condition Survey
Section 4	-	Suitability Assessment.

The last major section, which is about Sufficiency, will be published as a draft in December. We plan to publish details next month on how we will appraise AMPs (again, I'll say more tomorrow). **[SLIDE 21]** All four existing sections can be seen at, and downloaded from, our web site:

School Buildings Information Centre at www.dfee.gov.uk/schbldgs

Delivery

From targeting, I want to move on to the delivery of capital. **[SLIDE 22]** How to put the money where it will be most effective. Our innovation here is our new capital strategy. This has a number of components.

Firstly, AMP Appraisal and formula capital allocations to LEAs. This is very much on the principle of "intervention in inverse proportion to success". If we appraise an AMP and it is sound - with good collaboration across all schools in prioritising need, and good value for money in the proposed solutions and good maintenance, we will make a big formulaic allocation of capital to the LEA and leave it to get on with managing its capital programme. The other side of the coin is that we will bypass the LEA and provide grant direct to those schools where we consider investment is needed if the local processes are shown to be weak. And, from 2002-03, we will start to make capital allocations with a "discretionary" element - initially only 5% - but enabling us to reward Authorities by giving them extra money for good asset management.

From next April, we will also provide an annual ring-fenced allocation of capital direct to all schools - typically around $50,000. This will give schools the ability to direct capital funds to those areas which they regard as high priority and, for bigger projects, to enter into a real partnership with their LEA based on their own, tangible stake. Clearly, the dynamics will change, with schools having much greater ownership and influence. Another innovation from next April will be the use of Seed Challenge funding where we will be making available to each LEA seed money which can be used by schools to help lever in money from the private sector (such as from Sports or Arts bodies) for important but lower priority work. And public private partnerships I've already mentioned.

Evaluation

[SLIDE 23] The third major challenge facing us is evaluation. There is clearly an assumption that investment in schools has a positive impact on pupil performance. And whilst intuitively it seems reasonable that it does, the evidence to support this is largely anecdotal.

We have recently commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers to carry out a study to test the assumption about this link. The aim of the project is "to measure the additional effect, in terms of pupil attainment, of every £1 invested in schools capital".

The study will attempt to distil out from all of the very many other factors which have an impact on performance, the effect on standards of capital investment. If we can make this link (and our consultants tell us that if it is possible to measure the effect, then they will be able to do it!), we will be able to focus investment where it will have the maximum effect and, hopefully, justify further additional money.

[SLIDE 24] The project has already been commissioned and the methodology agreed, involving both qualitative and quantitative strands. The fieldwork is currently underway and as you can see we have been promised the results by the end of the year - just in time for the next spending review - the Year 2000 Review, when the Treasury will be deciding on each Department's budget for the next three years.

[SLIDE 25] The starting point for the study was a literature review. The consultants identified 38 relevant existing studies and the preliminary findings were:

- the evidence linking capital expenditure to school performance is mixed (some studies find positive relationships, some negative, some no relationships at all!)
- there is broad acceptance that capital expenditure can have an effect on performance (particularly when starting from a low level of initial capital - for example, in developing countries or, for advanced economies, more strongly in the earlier part of this century than in more recent decades)
- the general ambiguity in findings can probably be related, at least in part, to how the work was specified and carried out - the nature of the studies, and the qualitative and methodological differences.

[SLIDE 26] The consultants are also developing a conceptual model to illustrate how capital investment works its way through into educational attainment, and have listed a whole range of inputs and intermediate outputs. Whilst it may be possible with some confidence to identify the impact of capital investment on the intermediate outputs - such as improved teacher recruitment and retention, or better staying on rates or reduced truancy - it will of course be extremely challenging to identify the impact of capital investment alone on the final output of attainment levels. But that's what we're paying PwC very handsomely to do!

There are also a large number of structured interviews taking place with a representative sample of individual schools and Headteachers to help prove the model, and a whole load of data is currently being assembled and interrogated to try and measure the link - if it can be done.

New Programmes

[SLIDE 27] We now come to some specific programmes to address particular needs. Too many of our children are leaving school without the qualifications they should have for the future. We need a system which promotes high standards while encouraging diversity, which refuses to accept failure, and which insists that all children – including those with special

educational needs - are helped to success. Every school should aspire to the standards of the best. Every child should leave school confident that they have achieved everything of which they are capable. To achieve these aims, the Government has launched a number of high profile programmes.

Sure Start - this is a cross Departmental programme led jointly by education and health which is targeted at the most deprived areas of the country. It co-ordinates childcare, nursery education, family learning and primary health care initiatives for children from birth to age three, to help those children most at risk of deprivation to get off to a good start in life. It is key to the Government's drive to prevent social exclusion, raise educational standards, reduce health inequalities and promote opportunity.

[SLIDE 28] Sure Start is a new way of working, both locally and nationally. The programmes are put together by partnerships, usually including the local social services and health authorities, charities and voluntary organisations. They are intended to be "bottom-up" initiatives: few are led by their local council.

[SLIDE 29] Over £450 million has been set aside over 3 years. Of this, around 40% will be capital, which will go mainly into nurseries, creches, playgroups, family centres, health and special educational needs resources, offices and meeting rooms, training facilities and the like. Some projects will cost over £1 million, but most will be much smaller. Some new buildings will be needed, but the majority will be extensions and adaptations. So far, this initiative seems to be working well. 61 "Trailblazer" districts have been selected across the country on the basis of need, or to develop a range of different Sure Start settings. The number of programmes will rise to at least 250 by the end of 2002.

[SLIDE 30] Here is an example of a Sure Start initiative in action.

City Learning Centres

[SLIDE 31] The City Learning Centre (CLC) programme is one of seven main policy strands of the Government's new Excellence in Cities initiative which aims to raise educational standards at secondary schools in major cities. The strategy will focus on seven inner city areas: Inner London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Bradford and Sheffield.

The purpose of CLCs is to enhance the learning opportunities of pupils by providing better access to the latest Information and Communications Technology (ICT), thereby improving attainment levels and employment prospects.

[SLIDE 32] The CLCs also link with other Excellence in Cities policies, such as Beacon Schools (exemplar schools), Specialist Schools (to encourage diversity) and Education Action Zones (to encourage innovation), and initiatives for stretching gifted and talented children. Links to other facilities such as the IT based National Grid for Learning are also to be part of the CLC network.

[SLIDE 33] There are to be 85 of these centres. Local Education Authorities are responsible for establishing CLCs in their area. Each CLC will be linked to four partner secondary schools, which in turn will be linked to their feeder primary schools. A key requirement of the CLC is to cascade best practice amongst the local network of schools, including providing teacher training material.

Each CLC will receive £1.7million during the next two financial years to cover the initial capital cost and the running costs for the first year. These funds can be supplemented from other sources.

[SLIDE 34] Here is an example of what a CLC looks like.

Design Issues

[SLIDE 35] With so much extra capital going into schools, we have a good opportunity to improve the quality of their buildings. We want buildings that look good, modern and welcoming. But we also want buildings:

- that are fit for purpose and able to meet educational needs effectively
- which encourage inclusion of all people, and in particular pupils with special educational needs
- that are flexible in their use and support new technologies and ICT provision
- that are sustainable in design, so that they limit environmental damage.

Environmental Issues

As a part of the wider strategy by Government to promote sustainability and tackle climate change, the Department promotes elements of sustainable development to LEAs and schools. It does this, for example, by producing guidance on energy efficiency, water conservation and environmental design, and also through its capital programme.

Assessment criteria for capital programmes always include the overall environmental impact of projects and, in particular, the reduction in carbon dioxide emissions per m^2, or per pupil, each year. Environmental impact is one of the key principles underpinning our capital strategy.

Community Use

And we also wish to encourage greater community use of school facilities, and lifelong learning. We will shortly be publishing new guidance on school-community links. The guidance is intended to encourage more extensive utilisation of school premises outside normal school hours. It offers legal, financial and practical guidance for each type of school. The use of a range of school facilities, including those for sport, will contribute towards sustainable communities.

Millennium School

[SLIDE 36] All of these issues have been addressed in the development of a new school that we are building next to the Millennium Dome in Greenwich. The Dome will celebrate the coming of new Millennium, but we hope that the new school will make a much more lasting contribution by heralding changes in school building design that will take us many years into the next Millennium. It will be:

- a new primary school and health centre for Greenwich Millennium Village, a pioneering sustainable urban community next to the Dome
- an innovative design providing excellent accommodation for teaching the National Curriculum. Basic areas and costs are in line with our guidance
- an Early Years Centre, with 74 places for babies and younger children

- buildings fully accessible to those with disabilities. The school will include provision for nearly all kinds of special educational need, and close links with the adjoining health centre
- the school has been planned for childcare and study support both before and after school hours, and during holidays
- the school hall, studio, all-weather pitch and other facilities have been designed for community use out of school hours
- the complex will have state-of-the-art ICT
- there will be a one-stop-shop for advice and family support
- there will be a small open learning centre for adults, and other facilities for adult education and training
- energy and environmental performance will be considerably higher than currently required for schools.

Construction has already started, and completion is programmed for the end of 2000.

[SLIDE 37] This is what it will look like.

Conclusion

Modernising our schools and making sure that they have the right facilities for the educational needs of our children and the wider community is a big challenge. Advances in technology mean that the school of the future will be very different from the school of today. We all face similar problems. I am very pleased to have had this opportunity to tell you about some of the things we are doing in England, and to also be here to learn even more from you.

KEN BEETON
DfEE
30 OCTOBER 1999

[TALK.DOC]